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P 202152Z NOV 09  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA PRIORITY 1142  
INFO RHMCSUU/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RULSDMK/TRANSPORTATION DEPT WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0804  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 120241

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SUBJECT: ANGOLA: TRANSPORT MINISTER'S MEETING WITH DOT  
SECRETARY LAHOOD

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#### Secretarial-level Meeting

1. (SBU) On November 4, 2009, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood held a thirty-minute meeting with Angola,s Minister of Transport Augusto da Silva Tomas. The Minister spoke in great detail and with great enthusiasm (and without notes) about Angola,s integrated plan to completely restructure all aspects of its transportation sector, including aviation, rail, roads and ports. Noting his own background as former Minister of Finance and former Minister of Trade, Tomas emphasized that Angola views transport as a strategic sector that can put a full stop to other economic activities or propel them forward. Angola sees the necessity of increasing mobility and wants to move forward rapidly. He sought cooperation with the USG and U.S. firms in all these areas while confidently making the case for a unified Angolan government intent on wholesale restructuring of transportation systems so that Angola can take advantage of its geographic location to become a center for providing transportation services throughout West Africa. Secretary LaHood responded that DOT has expertise in all the areas that Tomas described and is fully prepared to explore cooperating with Angola on planes, trains and automobiles.

#### Civil Aviation

2. (SBU) Turning to the specific civil aviation sector, Tomas said Angola is updating 30 airports, building three new international airports and renovating a fourth one. He emphasized that all of the programs Angola is undertaking in the civair sector are aimed at renovating all aspects, including the legal basis, so that Angolan specialized aviation agencies will be brought into line with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). He said Angola,s INAVIC (civil aviation authority) and other agencies have benefited from cooperation with U.S. and European firms and authorities. He said Angolan aviation law is based on the U.S. model, which is very advanced for Angola. He said Angola,s goal is to reach international standards on safety and security,

with the immediate interest being to have Delta Air Lines start its service to Luanda.

13. (SBU) Tomas proudly explained that TAAG is the only African carrier that, having been placed on the EU "blacklist," has been able to have itself subsequently taken off the list, and that he hopes that by February 2010, TAAG will be able to expand its European points beyond Lisbon. (Note: TAAG technically remains on the EU blacklist as it can only serve Lisbon on the conditions that the route is operated only by TAAG, its new Boeing 777s and that each flight is inspected by the EU for compliance with safety procedures. End Note.)

14. (SBU) Angola, Tomas said, is in negotiations with Boeing to buy two new 777s so that it can expand service east towards Dubai and China and west to Brazil. He said Angola would like to continue and expand its relationship with U.S. EXIM bank to help finance this purchase and others for primary and secondary radar systems that have a 600 kilometer range. He said in the civil aviation sector Angola is seeking modern equipment to provide for safe and secure operations during the day and at night.

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#### Rail

15. (SBU) Tomas reported that Angola is renovating/improving three of its major national rail lines. He noted that the Benguela line improvements will allow copper from Zambia to flow through Angola directly to one of its ports. He said this route would be about 1,000 kilometers and help Zambia avoid the 4,000 to 5,000 kilometer journey that copper exports now take. The Democratic Republic of the Congo would also benefit from such a route, he said.

#### Ports

16. (SBU) Noting the importance of an integrated approach to the transport sector, Tomas said port restructuring is essential to the success of rail line renovation. Angola is reforming the ports at Lubitan and Mib, he said, while building a new deep-water port at Kabuna.

#### Roads

17. (SBU) Angola has purchased 3,640 new buses and put them into service in municipalities and for inter-city routes. In addition, Angola has started delivering new taxis to the four cities that will be hosting the Africa Cup of Nations soccer tournament in January 2010.

#### Attitude Change

18. (SBU) Tomas emphasized the changes that Angola has brought about since the end of the civil war. He said Angola recognizes its shortcomings and is determined to address them. He cited lack of personnel and technology, along with financing shortfalls, as the problems to be overcome. He said Angola has established a new logistical/management institute as the start of a solution to personnel shortages. The goal, he said, is to modernize 15 parastatal corporations so that they deliver quality services in an efficient manner and contribute to the national GDP. The institute, he said, seeks to produce competent graduates, imbued with ethics and a

sense of responsibility so they can implement the eforms already underway.

¶9. (SBU) To solve the technology and financing shortfalls, Tomas said Angola welcomes foreign investment and cooperation to work alongside Angola,s own capital resources. Tomas assured the Secretary that Angola is deeply committed to integrated transport reform and has undertaken its efforts only after careful study and appropriate reform of the legal and institutional foundations of the transportation sector.

¶10. (SBU) Secretary LaHood responded by noting that Angola has already accomplished a lot in its reform program. He said he, too, wants to see Delta begin flying to Angola as soon as it is safe and secure to do so and understood that security was a priority for Tomas. He noted that a planned follow-on discussion between the minister and his delegation and an interagency panel USG experts (Septel) would focus on aviation safety and security, but that DOT has expertise in all the areas of interest to Angola and is prepared to share that expertise. State Department rep highlighted Secretary Clinton,s recent announcement of a bilateral Strategic Partnership Dialogue (SPD) with Angola and the planned signing of an SPD arrangement scheduled for November 19. Tomas (and Ambassador Pitra Diakite) welcomed the SPD.

#### Participants

¶11. (SBU) The Angolan participants in the meeting included Ambassador Josefina Pitra Diakite; Gaspar Francisco dos Santos, Director General, INAVIC; and the interpreter Christina Lobo. The U.S. side included Susan McDermott,

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DAS for Aviation and International Affairs; Cornelia (Connie) Wilson-Hunter, Program Manager, Safe Skies for Africa, DOT; Steronica Dunston, DOT/OST; Daniel Moore, Director, Office of Transportation Policy, DOS; and John Alvis, interpreter.  
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